



ENTER God's presence

The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. – Psalm 19:7-9

Heavenly Father, as we gather around your word, allow it to form us into a closer likeness of you son Jesus Christ. Help us to find joy in following your commands. Fill us again with your Holy Spirit and show us again what you call us to do as we wait for you to call us home into your presence. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. Share your highs and lows with each other?
2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?
3. Share about a time in your life when the support and encouragement of others made all the difference.
4. How easy, or difficult, do you find it to accept the help and support of others?

Good foundations are important in all aspects of life whether it is buildings, family, theology, learning, or relationships; they are the base upon which everything else is built. Relationships need a solid foundation of trust, the early years of learning needs a basic knowledge in a given subject to provide a foundation for further learning, a good foundation provides structural integrity to the building that is erected on it. Strong foundations anchor our lives in changing times, protect our lives in all conditions, are load bearing when we most need support and give confidence in moving forward. That's Jude's final reminder to all Christians today. Faith matters because faith in God is the foundation on which the Church together can build strong, secure lives which reveal to the world what we truly believe. Today we'll explore that as Jude points out "What you do!"

Week beginning:
Sunday 4th October 2020

Worship series:

Faith Matters



VERSE for the week

But you dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

- Jude 1:20-21



REMEMBER this week

A foundation built on the holy God enables us together to:

- Live obediently
- Love completely
- Pray boldly
- Hope eternally
- Serve purposefully.



LISTEN attentively

Read Jude 1:20-25

5. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?
6. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?
7. What does praying in the Holy Spirit mean to you?

Here at the end of Jude's letter he returns to some of the sporting imagery he used in his introduction as he called Christians to contend for the faith. In these last few verses he calls us all to refuse to rest on our laurels. Jude acknowledges that our salvation has been won by Jesus Christ, but he reminds us that there is still a task to be done; one that requires us to train and strengthen ourselves (build ourselves up) in the faith. He calls us to actively seek to stay in God's love while we wait for Jesus to come back and take his people with him into eternal life. But we are not to do this alone, Jude does not say *you* are to build *yourself* up, but rather tells us that *we* are to build *ourselves* up. This is something that the people of God are to do together, to help each other and be accountable to each other for our growth and development, our strength and maturity in the faith.

8. Who is someone (apart from Jesus) who has greatly influenced your faith? What was it about them that inspired or encouraged you to take your faith more seriously?
9. What practices do you currently have in place in your life that help you to keep growing in your faith? What things have you found useful in the past that you might like to take up again?

In terms of what we are to do, Jude gives some specific examples. Read verse 22 again. There are some interesting tasks here. Some seem straight forward, others might need some explaining but all are worth being reminded of. Firstly, be merciful to those who doubt. Whether it is on television news or panel style chat shows, in print media or some online/social media forum, it is usually not too hard to find Christians showing a lack of mercy to those who disagree with them. The apostle Paul says in numerous places throughout the New Testament things along these lines, "we did not come convincing you with clever words or fancy arguments, but with the power of God." Sometimes we need to address people's legitimate questions about faith, but we should always do so with gentleness and humility and always letting the power of God at work in our lives speak for itself. Secondly, we are sometimes required to 'snatch people from the fire'. If you have ever tried to rescue something from a fire, you are probably familiar with the pain that can be associated with doing this. Jude is reminding us that sometimes we have to get along side people and get involved with their pain and suffering in order to help them out of it and bring them back to life with Jesus. This is, after all, exactly what Jesus did for us. What better way to share the love and grace of Jesus than with this kind of care and compassion. Finally, Jude acknowledges that there are people who are simply out to trip Christians up, and to be a stumbling block to us. Yet even to those we are to show mercy but at the same time exercise caution being careful not to be led astray.

10. In your faith story, did you ever have someone reach out to you in any of these ways? Have you ever been able to reach out to someone else in any of these ways? Share some of your experiences.
11. All of these directives that Jude gives his readers focus on our care and concern for others. Our world largely encourages us to take care of ourselves. How do you survive as an 'others focussed' person in a 'self focussed' world? What are some of the challenges?



GROW deeper

Jude's letter finishes with a doxology, a statement giving praise and ascribing glory and honour to God. Yet he begins it with a unique introduction. Read Jude 1:24 again. Despite all that Jude asks us to do for others, by showing them mercy and snatching them from the fire, he reminds us that it is God, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus who keeps us upright, who makes us holy and blameless. It is not our doing the things Jude describes that does this, but only the mercy and Grace of God through Christ Jesus.

- 12. Why is it important to be reminded that our righteousness comes from Jesus and not from ourselves?**
- 13. Jude's doxology reminds us of the eternal power, glory and majesty of God. How do you usually picture God? How does it line up with the kind of traits of God which Jude reminds us of.**

From the beginning of his letter right until the end, Jude has had a sense of urgency as he calls Christians to contend for the faith, preserve the truth and integrity of the good news of Jesus, and to build each other up in the faith, showing mercy to all. Jude, and many Christians like him at the time, expected Jesus to return relatively quickly. Many believed that it would happen within their lifetime. Yet in our world of super-fast internet and communication technology, where time is money and everything has to be done right now, the urgency of dealing with eternity seems to have slipped down most people's priority list. In some ways or thoughts about eternity might be like Sir David Attenborough's thoughts on climate change. In a recent interview he said, 'the problem with climate change is that it has always been tomorrow's problem and so we do nothing while we focus on the problems that affect us today'. If we take this approach with faith, and don't do anything to preserve it, strengthen it, keep it or share it today, what would happen if Jesus suddenly returned tomorrow?

- 14. How often does the thought of Jesus returning to earth in judgement influence the way you live?**



LIVE purposefully

We have said this before but one thing that many of us forget about eternity is that it encompasses all of time, past, future and present. Our eternal life in Jesus is not just a future promise, it becomes a present reality when we are baptised into God's family. Yes, our earthly bodies may still come to an end but our life will go on in Christ Jesus. Your faith matters, not just for today, but for eternity. What you do with it and how you share it and help to develop it in others matters, not just for today but for eternity. Your eternity is sure in Jesus but there are many people who have not yet come to know that Jesus also died for them. To those people what you do with your faith matters.

- 15. What is one thing in your life that might look different if you lived each day as the first day of your eternal life?**
- 16. What is stopping that thing from being different in your life right now?**



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for revealing his truth to us in his Word and bringing it alive for us today.
- Thank Jesus for the gift of eternal life which he won for you on the cross.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live each day in light of eternity, bearing witness to Jesus and all that he has done.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], Christ is your sure foundation. Amen.